



U.S. Department of Justice

United States Attorney

Eastern District of Pennsylvania

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NEWS RELEASE

United States Attorney Michael L. Levy and Northampton County District Attorney John M. Morganelli today announced the filing of an Indictment¹ against Claritza E. Benitez and Gerardo Santiago-Oquendo charging them with one count of possession with intent to distribute 5 grams or more of crack, one count of possession with intent to distribute cocaine, one count of possessing firearms in furtherance of drug trafficking, and one count of possessing firearms after having been convicted of a felony.

INFORMATION REGARDING THE DEFENDANTS

NAME	ADDRESS	AGE
Claritza E. Benitez	Bethlehem, PA	41
Gerardo Santiago-Oquendo	Bethlehem, PA	28

If convicted of all charges, the defendants face maximum possible sentences of life in prison with a mandatory minimum of 20 years in prison, eight years to lifetime supervised release, a fine of \$6,250,000, and a special assessment of \$400.

The case was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Bethlehem Police Department and is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Andrew J. Schell. This case is part of the “222 Corridor Anti-Gang Initiative,” a federally funded program designed to defeat some of the most violent and pervasive gangs in the country. The “222 Corridor” includes the cities of Allentown, Bethlehem, Easton, Reading, Lancaster, York, and Harrisburg. The initiative combines federal, state, and local law enforcement resources to attack gang crime and violence throughout the corridor.

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¹An Indictment is an accusation. A defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

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